



# Reagan, Hill Move to Bolster Embassy Security

In the wake of the latest terrorist attack against U.S. personnel in Lebanon, Congress and the Reagan administration are rushing to shore up security at U.S. embassies overseas and to enact anti-terrorism legislation that had been in limbo for months.

The House is scheduled to consider on Oct. 1 an omnibus bill (HR 6311) authorizing \$356.3 million for improved embassy security. That measure would establish rewards of up to \$500,000 for persons giving conclusive information on terrorists. Appropriations for embassy security were expected to be attached to a fiscal 1985 continuing appropriations resolution (H J Res 648). (*Status*, p. 2355)

The frenetic activity on Capitol Hill came amid increasingly bitter bickering between Democrats and the administration over the Sept. 20 truck bombing of a newly opened U.S. Embassy annex near Beirut. At least 14 persons died in the blast, among them two Americans. A shadowy group calling itself the "Islamic Jihad" claimed responsibility for the bombing.

Democrats, led by presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale and House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., Mass., sought to make a political issue of security lapses at the embassy, and President Reagan responded with a series of statements apparently intended to minimize his own responsibility in the matter.

The day after the bombing, Mondale said Reagan "is clearly to blame, let me put it this way, clearly responsible, for the overall policy and direction" in Lebanon. O'Neill issued almost daily statements attacking Reagan's policy failures there.

Reagan infuriated Democrats by two statements. In an off-the-cuff remark Sept. 23, he appeared to shrug off the failure to complete embassy security arrangements, saying that "anyone that's ever had their kitchen done over knows that it never gets done as soon as you wish it would."

O'Neill called that statement a "blatantly stupid alibi" for security failures, and Senate Minority Leader

## Anti-Terrorist Bills Off the Back Burner

Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., said it "trivializes the loss of American lives."

Three days later, in a campaign appearance at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, Reagan seemed to be shifting the blame to former President Carter. Asked about the bombing, he said: "We're feeling the effects today of the near-destruction of our intelligence capability in recent years before we came" into office.

That comment brought even angrier responses. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, took the floor Sept. 26 to demand an apology, saying Reagan had made a statement that "is not only false, it is reckless." Such statements, Moynihan said, would invite further terrorist attacks on U.S. personnel. Moynihan said Carter had increased spending on the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., trembling with anger, called Reagan's remark "an irresponsible distortion,

an irresponsible slur on the members of our intelligence service, a slur on the people who have died."

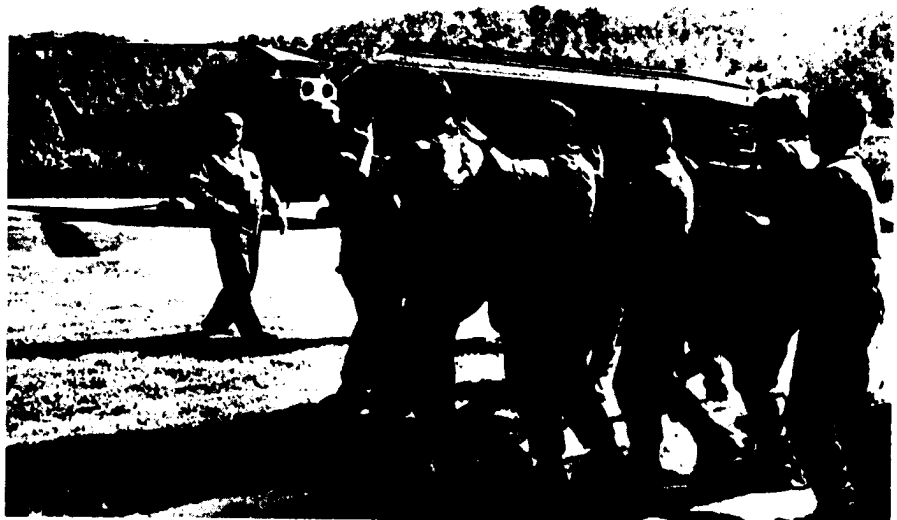
Reagan retreated Sept. 27, saying the press had "distorted" his remarks.

Leahy and others noted that the bombing was the third of a U.S. facility in Lebanon during the last 17 months of the Reagan administration. In April 1983, a car bomb destroyed the old U.S. Embassy in Beirut, killing more than 50 persons, and in October 1983 a truck bomb destroyed the U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut, killing 241 U.S. military personnel. (*Background*, 1983 Almanac p. 113)

## The Bombing in Lebanon

As with the other incidents, the Sept. 20 embassy bombing prompted a rash of hearings on Capitol Hill. At least four congressional committees said they were looking into various aspects of the incident, and the administration launched its own inquiry headed by Richard Murphy, the assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian affairs.

A commission headed by former CIA Deputy Director Adm. Bobby R. Inman also is examining security measures at all embassies and is expected to report by the end of the year.



Lebanese Army soldiers carry the casket of one U.S. victim to a waiting helicopter. The Sept. 20 embassy bombing prompted members of Congress to attack U.S. policies.

—By John Felton

## Foreign Policy - 2



At the scene of the embassy bombing, an injured U.S. Marine is helped onto a stretcher. At least four congressional panels plan to investigate the incident.

In all quarters, the main question was why the embassy was not better protected, given the history of car- and truck-bomb attacks in Lebanon. The building, in the town of Aukar east of Beirut, was opened in July; it took the place of a converted apartment building in West Beirut that had housed U.S. diplomats since the old embassy was destroyed in 1983.

State Department officials told Congress that security arrangements at the new building were 75 percent complete. But some members challenged that figure, noting that a steel gate that might have blocked the bomb-laden truck had been delivered but not installed.

"There was bipartisan outrage that security was not appropriate," said Rep. Daniel A. Mica, D-Fla., following a closed-door meeting on Sept. 26 at which House Foreign Affairs Committee members questioned State Department officials.

Those officials admitted that security was inadequate, but they said State decided to move into the building even before security arrangements were completed because it was safer for diplomats than the previous building in West Beirut.

From Reagan on down, administration officials also said that it is impossible to provide absolute security for U.S. facilities overseas, especially in strife-torn areas such as Lebanon.

"An embassy is a public building," said Ronald I. Spiers, under secretary of state for management. "If any embassy is a fortress, it really

doesn't do its job."

Although the immediate response in Washington to the bombing was to pump additional money into embassy security worldwide, there was no evidence that lack of money contributed to the vulnerability of the Lebanon building. Spiers and other officials told Congress that the State Department had "adequate" funds to provide security at the building. The administration had spent about \$17 million on new buildings in Lebanon, with congressional approval.

"The problems that we've had are not with the Congress," Spiers told the Foreign Affairs Committee. "The sins of omission are on us, and not on the Congress."

### Embassy Security

The administration on Sept. 26 formally sought congressional approval of \$110.2 million, along with 172 new State Department personnel, to make "urgent" improvements in security at 35 to 50 embassies.

That request was for less than a third of the \$356.3 million that administration officials had said would be needed for a more comprehensive bolstering of embassy security in the coming two years.

Spiers called the request a "direct and immediate response" to the Lebanon bombing, but insisted that the administration would have asked for the money anyway next year.

The Foreign Affairs Committee voted authorization for the full \$356.3 million, including \$351 million for the

State Department and \$5.3 million for the U.S. Information Agency.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee also approved the full \$356.3 million on Sept. 28.

Democrats, and some Republicans, used the request as an occasion to attack the administration on two grounds: its overnight flip-flop on how much money to seek from Congress, and its slowness in implementing an earlier "security enhancement" program at embassies worldwide.

Administration officials on Sept. 25 had privately told members of Congress that the request would be for about \$360 million. The next day, Spiers ran into a buzz saw of criticism at the Foreign Affairs Committee when he presented the stripped-down \$110.2 million request and said the rest would be sought in 1985.

Committee Chairman Dante B. Fascell, D-Fla., called the cutback "stupid." Mica, head of the International Operations Subcommittee, said Reagan was forfeiting a chance to get Hill approval of the full amount.

Fascell charged that the administration's decision to pare its immediate request was part of its long-term "slippage and deferral" of embassy security improvements that had been demanded and funded by Congress.

Noting that Congress has authorized \$700 million for improved embassy security since 1979, Fascell said: "The reason a lot of us are frustrated and upset is because this program has been allowed to be slipped and deferred and stretched . . . and we have expressed our dismay at that and we have fussed and fumed." The administration, he said, decided "not to give it the high priority it deserved."

Spiers did not respond directly to Fascell's charges, but said he considered the State Department to be "woefully underfunded."

On Sept. 28, administration officials finally asked the Foreign Relations Committee to authorize the full \$356.3 million. But that failed to satisfy panel members, who asked sharp questions about why Reagan was still seeking actual appropriations of only \$110.2 million.

"If he wants the moon, have him ask for it, and I'll try to get it," said Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del.

Charles McC. Mathias Jr., R-Md., citing the differences between what officials indicated is needed and what Reagan has asked Congress to spend, said: "The Congress is willing to provide whatever is necessary."

### Anti-Terrorism Bills

Congressional reaction to the latest Beirut bombing also pried loose at least one, and possibly three, of four anti-terrorism bills that had been gathering dust in Congress since Reagan proposed them in April.

The most important measure would provide rewards of up to \$500,000 to individuals providing information leading to the arrest or conviction of those responsible for terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens or property, in any country. Similar awards also could be provided for information leading to the prevention or frustration of such an attack.

The rewards are authorized in the omnibus bill (HR 6311) approved on Sept. 26 by the House Foreign Affairs Committee and in a separate bill (S 2625) approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on Sept. 18 and by the Foreign Relations Committee on Sept. 25. The Senate bill authorizes \$10 million for the rewards; the House bill provides \$5 million, but a Foreign Affairs aide said it will be amended to allow \$10 million.

Two related measures also are set for House floor action on Oct. 1.

One (S 2623, HR 5690) would implement a 1981 international agreement requiring countries to establish jurisdiction over sabotage of civil air flights. The bill establishes a fine of up to \$100,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to 20 years for persons convicted of air sabotage. The Senate Judiciary Committee approved S 2623 on Sept. 19, and the House Judiciary Crime Subcommittee approved HR 5690 on Sept. 26.

The other bill (S 2624, HR 5689) would implement a 1979 U.N. treaty against hostage-taking. The bill would amend U.S. kidnapping law to cover cases in which a threat is made to kill, injure or continue to detain a kidnapping victim in order to force a third party to take some action. The House Crime Subcommittee approved that measure on Sept. 26.

A fourth anti-terrorism bill sought by Reagan (S 2626, HR 5613) would allow the secretary of state to designate individuals, groups or countries as "terrorists" and would ban U.S. citizens, resident aliens or businesses from providing any training or support to designated terrorists.

Congressional aides said that bill is dead for the year because of opposition from civil liberties groups and because of questions about its vague definition of terrorism. ■

## FOREIGN POLICY NOTES

### Afghan Rebels

Breaking a two-year-long deadlock, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Sept. 25 approved a resolution (S Con Res 74) calling on the Reagan administration "to effectively support" Moslem rebels in Afghanistan who are battling Soviet occupation of their country.

The panel deleted from the resolution a call for "effective material assistance" to the rebels. Committee member Charles McC. Mathias Jr., R-Md., had objected to that language, arguing that it would give the administration an open-ended authorization. Mathias, who had helped block Senate action on the resolution since 1982, was acting chairman when the committee considered the measure. Committee Chairman Charles H. Percy, R-Ill., skipped the last two weeks of the congressional session to campaign for re-election.

The administration also dropped its objections to the resolution once the "effective material assistance" language was removed. Officials had complained that the resolution would be embarrassing to Pakistan, through which arms and supplies are shipped to the rebels in Afghanistan.

The House version of the Afghanistan resolution (H Con Res 237) has been bottled up in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, with little prospect of action this year. (*Weekly Report* p. 1903)

The full Senate may consider S Con Res 74 the week of Oct. 1. ■

### Polish Farmers

Congress is moving quickly to make an unusual \$10 million contribution to a Roman Catholic Church-sponsored foundation that would aid family farmers in Poland. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Sept. 25 approved a bill (S 3000) authorizing the contribution. That same day, the Senate Appropriations Committee added the money to an omnibus continuing appropriations resolution (S J Res 356) for fiscal 1985. (*Continuing resolution*, p. 2355)

President Reagan had proposed the \$10 million contribution in August, shortly after the Polish government and Roman Catholic Church reached an agreement on establishment of the foundation.

The Polish church has sought \$28 million in Western contributions for foundation projects in 1985 in such areas as milk handling, tractor tires, local workshops, food processing and water supply.

Committee members said they supported the measure because it would provide aid to the Polish people without going through the Polish government. In a statement, Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., said the bill would enable members of Congress to draw a distinction "between our disapproval of the Polish regime and our sympathetic support for the Polish people who suffer at its hands." ■

### Jerusalem Embassy

Congress apparently will be able to avoid taking any action this year on the politically sensitive question of whether the U.S. Embassy in Israel should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Two House Foreign Affairs subcommittees are scheduled on Oct. 2 to consider a bill (HR 4877) requiring the president to move the embassy to Jerusalem. The panels, which have been sitting on the bill for months, had been scheduled to act on Sept. 26, but postponed action at the last minute. Even if, as expected, the two subcommittees finally approve the measure on Oct. 2, there will not be enough time left in this year's session for it to go through other stages of the legislative process.

The Reagan administration has adamantly opposed the bill on grounds that it might complicate U.S. peacemaking efforts in the Middle East. Administration officials have been negotiating for several weeks with Reps. Tom Lantos, D-Calif., and Benjamin A. Gilman, R-N.Y., the key sponsors of the bill.

One senior Foreign Affairs Committee member said that even though the bill has the nominal support of a majority in both houses, "nobody wants it except two or three guys, and they are pushing like hell for it."

A companion bill in the Senate (S 2031) is considered dead for this year. (*Weekly Report* p. 752) ■